PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD, HARRISON STATION SOUTHWEST HEADHOUSE
(Hudson & Manhattan Railroad, Harrison Station Southwest Headhouse)
913 Frank E. Rodgers Boulevard South
Harrison
Hudson County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1274
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
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Location: 913 Frank E. Rodgers Boulevard
Harrison
Hudson County
New Jersey
Latitude: 40.44' 20" N
Longitude: 74.09' 20" W
This point represents the approximate location of where the main entry would have been. This data was obtained on February 16, 2024, using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction for its release to the public.

Present Owner: Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH)

Occupant: Since the 1960s until the demolition of the headhouse, the occupant has been PATH.

Present Use: The Harrison Station Southwest Headhouse is no longer extant. A new headhouse has been built in its place that is elevated to prevent flooding, meets ADA requirements and accommodates growing ridership.

Significance: The Harrison Station, constructed in 1937, was a component of the railway system constructed by the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad Company (H&M). Also known as the H&M Hudson Tubes, the H&M rail lines and tunnels below the Hudson River were instrumental in establishing commuter routes between New York City and New Jersey and are exemplary feats of engineering technology as they were the first railroad tunnel under a major river in the United States.[1] The Station used to provide service primarily on the eastbound World Trade Center Line for the H&M and for PATH. The Station was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and listed as a contributing resource in the Pennsylvania Railroad New York to Philadelphia Historic District.

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Project Information:
This HABS report was begun in advance of the demolition of the Harrison Station to construct a new Headhouse at the same location and in compliance with a Memorandum of Agreement that was established with the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office.[2] The historic Station was significantly impacted by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, which flooded the building

[1] "Hudson and Manhattan Railroad Tunnel," American Society of Civil Engineers, accessed September 30, 2024, https://www.asce.org/about-civil-engineering/history-and-heritage/historic-landmarks/hudson-and-manhattan-railroad-tunnel.

[2] Port Authority of New York and New Jersey – Port Authority Trans-Hudson Transit System, The Federal Transit Administration and New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, *Memorandum of Agreement Regarding the Harrison Station Replacement Project. Town of Harrison, Hudson County, New Jersey*, June 29, 2020.

with five feet of water taking it out of operation for over a year. Adaptations to mitigate flooding further impacted the historic integrity of the building, including partially blocking window openings with masonry. The New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (NJSHPO), PANYNJ, PATH and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on March 8, 2021, (HPO Project #19-2566-8) requiring this HABS report along with other mitigation measures (interpretive panels, original salvaged artifacts, large images of archival photographs as murals). Large-format photography was captured by Walter Dufresne, Photographer, of Brooklyn, New York. Black-and-white LVT negatives and their corresponding digital print cards were produced from original source materials and processed to archival standards by Frederick Charles, Consulting Photographer, of Dobbs Ferry, NY. Measured drawings were prepared by Architectural Preservation Studio, DPC of New York, New York.

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** 1937

2. **Architect:** Not known

3. **Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:** The original owners were Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) and Hudson and Manhattan (H&M) Railroad Company. In 1962, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) acquired H&M.[3] Until 2021, the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH), a wholly owned subsidiary of the PANYNJ, operated at the Station. The Harrison Station Southwest Headhouse was then replaced with a new station where PATH continues to operate.

4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) and Hudson and Manhattan Railroad Company (H&M)

5. **Original plans and construction:** Not available

6. **Alterations and additions:**

   A circular limestone pediment above the coping stone on the east façade originally housed a clock as was customary for many of the train stations built at the time. The clock was removed at an unknown date.[4]

   Based on physical evidence observed at the Station, it is estimated that the projecting metal canopy, lighting above the main entry, and metal doors were added on the east façade, while the coin room and the wood-frame wall at the west perimeter of the ticketing area were also added to the interior. These changes were likely executed by PANYNJ when it acquired H&M in the 1960s.

   In 2012, after Hurricane Sandy flooded the Station, poured-in-place concrete panels were installed at ground-floor level windows, and openings on the south elevation of the stair bulkhead were filled in with brick masonry. Flood-gate rails were also installed at the main and service entrances. In addition, selective short-term repairs to the platform were performed.

   The platform originally was 13'-0" wide and served eight train cars. It was expanded at each end in 2019 to accommodate ten train cars. All alterations/repairs were performed by PATH.

B. Historical Context

The nineteenth century in the United States marked the development of railroad systems across the country. By the latter half of the century, the northeast corridor was well served by the Pennsylvania Railroad yet routes were restricted to land travel. Railroad companies typically ran lines to waterfront stations and provided transfer to their associated ferry services for travel across waterways. Ferry service proved inadequate, and plans to construct

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[3] "History," PANYNJ, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.panynj.gov/path/en/about/history.html.

[4] "TBT: The Original Pennsylvania Railroad/Harrison Path Station," *YourHarrison.com*, August 18, 2022, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.yourharrison.com/blog/tbt-the-original-pennsylvania-railroad-harrison-path-station.

tunnels below the Hudson River were initiated by PRR in 1874. Financial issues and multiple deaths during construction halted several attempts to complete the tunnels.[5]

In 1902, plans for a tunnel system were revived by William Gibbs McAdoo. In partnership with engineers Charles M. Jacobs and J. Vipond Davies, McAdoo designed a system of tunnels to carry passengers between Jersey City and Downtown Manhattan (called the Downtown Tubes) and between Hoboken and Uptown Manhattan (called the Uptown Tubes). The Hudson and Manhattan Railroad Company was formed with McAdoo as its president. The Uptown Tubes opened in 1908 with service from Hoboken Terminal in Hoboken to West 33rd Street Terminal in Upper Manhattan, and the Downtown Tubes followed in 1909 with service from Exchange Place in Jersey City to Hudson Terminal in Lower Manhattan. These tunnels were the first to be constructed under a major river in the United States.[6]

The location of Harrison, New Jersey, lent itself favorably to trade, and the town's close proximity to both railroad and river transport led to its evolution into a center for industry. Referred to as the "Beehive of Industry" by President William Howard Taft, Harrison was once home to the Crucible Steel Company, Edison Lamp Works, Nopco Chemical, Otis Elevator, and the RCA Company, among others.[7] In 1906, the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad (DL&W) erected a station in Harrison as a stop on its Morris & Essex Line.[8]

The Manhattan Transfer Station was constructed in Harrison in 1910 to provide service to H&M and PRR trains. The station was not equipped with entrances or exits but was a two-platform station used by passengers to change from the PRR steam trains to the H&M electric trains or from the PRR main lines to PRR local lines. The Manhattan Transfer Station was closed in 1937,[9] when the transfer between H&M and PRR lines was relocated to the newly constructed Newark Penn Station in Newark, New Jersey.

The original H&M Harrison Station was opened in 1913 at the intersection of 4th Street (now Frank E. Rodgers Boulevard South) and New Jersey Railroad Avenue to connect service from Manhattan Transfer to Newark-Park Place in Newark, New Jersey.[10] The H&M Harrison Station was built at the current location in 1937, just a few blocks south of the original station. It also served the New York and Long Branch Railroad line of the PRR.

After the completion of the Holland Tunnel in 1927 and the Lincoln Tunnel in 1937, travel to New York City via automobile grew. Ridership on the H&M lines declined, and by 1954, the company had fallen into bankruptcy. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey acquired H&M in 1962 and retained the Harrison Station as a stop on its eastbound PATH service between Newark Penn Station and the original World Trade Center complex.[11]

Through most of its history, Harrison was primarily industrial, and the vast majority of factory workers lived outside of its limits. However, after the turn of the twenty-first century, the town's short commute to New York City and burgeoning housing market began to draw residents to the area. In 2012, the Port Authority authorized the replacement of the Harrison Station Southwest Headhouse, which no longer served the capacity of increased

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[5] "Hudson and Manhattan Tunnel," American Society of Civil Engineers Metropolitan Section, *ascemetsection.org*, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.ascemetsection.org/committees/history-and-heritage/landmarks/hudson-manhattan-tunnel.

[6] "The Public Be Pleased: William Gibbs McAdoo and the Hudson Tubes," *NYCSubway.org*, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.nycsubway.org/wiki/The_Public_Be_Pleased:_William_Gibbs_McAdoo_and_the_Hudson_Tubes.

[7] "History," Town of Harrison, accessed February 28, 2024, https://townofharrison.com/201/History#:~:text=Taft%2C%20addressing%20the%20residents%2C%20told,up%20for%20the%20town%27s%20use.

[8] The New Jersey Transit Corporation acquired operation of the DL&W lines in 1983 and closed its Harrison Station in 1984. The station was demolished shortly afterward.

[9] "Showing Image 128169," NYCSubway.org, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.nycsubway.org/perl/show?128169.

[10] "History," PANYNJ, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.panynj.gov/path/en/about/history.html.

[11] Ibid.

ridership and provided no handicapped access. Additionally, Hurricane Sandy caused damage to critical equipment at the former Station and nearby PATH electrical sub-station from approximately five feet of floodwaters. Saltwater intrusion resulted in further damage to the concrete platform piers and the former Station's foundation and masonry walls. To provide permanent flood protection as well as adequate and accessible service for the growing local population, PANYNJ constructed a new station complex comprised of four elevated headhouses.

Part II. Architectural Information

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:**
   The Harrison Station Southwest Headhouse was a one-story structure with a stair bulkhead and partial cellar laid out in a rectangular floor plan with chamfered edges at the southern corners. It employed elements that are associated with the Georgian architectural style. The main entryway, accentuated with its limestone pediment and semicircular metal canopy, had a double door with a transom and sidelights. The main entrance with its border of dentils executed in masonry had a keystone with PRR engraved in it at the center of the flat arch supported by a steel lintel. Just north of the main entrance was one of the six-over-six-light double-hung metal windows.

   The south façade exhibited some level of symmetry with five windows that had four six-over-six-light double-hung metal windows and one opening with two two-over-two-light double-hung windows topped with flat arches supported by steel lintels. The openings were further accented with borders of dentils executed in masonry as well as recessed brick spandrels below each window and were surmounted by a limestone cornice. A similar six-over-six-light double-hung metal window existed along the west façade chamfer.

   The rectangular plan was a utilitarian one with the ticket area to the east and the employees' area to the west. The interior walls were characterized by yellow glazed bricks with curved edges.

2. **Condition of fabric:** At the time of the assessment completed in 2019, the Station was in a poor condition and in need of repairs. The existing fabric displayed numerous conditions such as spalled bricks, masonry cracks, deflected window lintels, parapet cracks, cracks on the exposed concrete foundation at the perimeter of the building, cracks on the concrete beams and columns supporting the platform, corroded entrance canopy, biological growth on the brick walls, and corroded columns as well as peeling paint on the platform. There was also deterioration of ceiling finishes and paint. The Station was demolished in 2021, in accordance with the MOA.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall dimensions:** The Headhouse is 87'-4" in width and 28'-3" in depth, and its height is 35'-0".

2. **Foundation:** The Headhouse had two sections: the ticket area (east section) was a slab on grade with a concrete footing, and the employees' area (west section) was a partial basement that included poured-in-place concrete walls.

3. **Walls:** The walls were composite walls, steel-framed with masonry infill. The four façades and the stair bulkhead were constructed of ochre-yellow brick laid out in the stretcher bond and had a brick dentil along the perimeter of the windows.

The east, south, and west façades of the ground floor had a stone water table, a prominent limestone cornice above the windows, and stone copings above a low brick parapet. The south façade was fenestrated with five windows while the east and west façades had one window and a door, respectively. The door on the west façade was below grade and led to a cellar while the double doors on the east (southeast) façade were the main entryway that led into the ticketing area. From the ground to the top of the coping stone, the south, east, and west walls were approximately 21' high. The exterior walls were three wythes thick (12"). The stair bulkhead measured 15'-5" in height. On the southeast parapet was written in bronze signage "HARRISON." Above it was the circular pediment that originally housed a clock.[12]

The north façade adjacent to the platform was also constructed of masonry laid out in a stretcher bond. From the platform to the top of the roof, this wall was 10'-6" high and approximately 12" thick. The north façade was fenestrated with three windows and had two double doors and a third door that provided access to the roof. There were exposed steel columns with brackets that were structurally integrated with the north wall that supported the cantilevered roof over the platform. The north wall also had three large "HARRISON" signs especially for commuters in the trains.

4. Stairways:

An internal steel stairway with thirty-five risers and wall-mounted rails led passengers from the ticketing area on the ground floor up to the railway platform.

5. Structural system, framing:

The structural framing of the Station was composed of steel columns and beams with masonry infill. The structural system employed on the upper floor was markedly integrated: the prefabricated steel stairway was supported on steel columns, and the landing became the exterior platform, while the platform and canopy columns became supports for the north wall. There were ten exposed steel columns on the north façade along the platform with brackets and a C-channel going across the length of the Station over which sat sistered wood rafters with a Spartan-tail design supporting a wood roof.

The extensions to the concrete platform were supported on concrete columns with individual footings that were visible below the platform.

6. Openings:

a. Doors and doorways: The main entrance/exit doorway to the Station was on the southeast chamfered corner. This entrance/exit was marked with a pair of metal double doors with a semi-circular steel canopy. The main doorway also had a flat brick arch supported on a steel lintel with a decorative limestone keystone with the letters "PRR" engraved in it and the metal letters "HARRISON" above the keystone. The keystone and metal letters were salvaged and reinstalled as part of the Heritage Plaza at the newly constructed station. The main entrance/exit also had signage above it that read "PATH Trains to Jersey City, Hoboken, New York" and "PATH Trains to Newark" with arrows indicating their locations. Right next to the main entrance/exit was another large sign that read "Harrison Station, PATH Trains East & NY." The pair of metal entrance/exit doors included a hydraulic door closer and metal pull handles; the doors measured 8'-8" in height. They were flanked by wire-glazed sidelight windows with a transom window. Additionally unanticipated discoveries were made during demolition: the main entrance/exit revealed elements such as a glass transom and metal signs mounted above the doorway, and these have been salvaged by PATH.

[12] "TBT: The Original Pennsylvania Railroad/Harrison Path Station," *YourHarrison.com*, August 18, 2022, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.yourharrison.com/blog/tbt-the-original-pennsylvania-railroad-harrison-path-station.

The below-grade service entrance/exit at the west façade had a flush metal door, approximately 3'-6" wide, and did not employ decorative masonry elements. The main entrance/exit doorway and the service doors were retrofitted with floodgate vertical rails after Hurricane Sandy so the doorways could be boarded up during floods.

Two glazed steel double doors with metal pull bars led to the concrete platform from the upper-level waiting area on the north façade. Each double door measured 5'-3" wide. There was a single steel door at this level that was blocked with signage that indicated that it opened to the Headhouse roof. It measured approximately 2'-7" in width. Each of the doors on the north façade was topped with masonry headers supported on steel lintels.

b. Windows:
The window openings on the east, south, and west façades typically had flat brick arches with wedge-shaped voussoirs supported on steel lintels and were surrounded by a decorative border of dentils executed in masonry. Five steel-framed windows were evenly spaced along the ground-floor south façade: four were six-over-six-light double-hung metal windows; one opening had two two-over-two-light double-hung windows. There was one six-over-six-light double-hung metal window on the east and west façades. All the windows on the ground floor were approximately 4'-8" in width and 9'-1" in height. They all sat above limestone sills and were partially blocked on the exterior by poured-in-place concrete panels.

The south façade of the stair bulkhead originally had three glass-block windows, two of which were filled with brick presumably after Hurricane Sandy. Each window had a decorative border of dentils executed in masonry similar to the ground-floor openings. They measured 4'-0" in width and 4'-9" in height. A short and wide glass-block window was located on the east façade of the stairway bulkhead as well.

There were three windows on the north façade, each with brick headers supported above a steel lintel and with limestone windowsills that were infilled with wood panels. These were 2'-9" in width and 4'-2" in height.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:
The Station had a flat membrane roof with a low brick parapet topped with limestone copings. The stair bulkhead also had a flat membrane roof with short stub walls. Two downspouts with scuppers were visible on the south façade. The cantilevered roof over the platform was a wood roof covered with what appeared to be lead-coated copper. The roof had a slight pitch towards the south and was supported by steel columns with brackets as well as wood joists at regular intervals.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plan:

a. Ground floor:
The entrance lobby of the Station was a chamfered-shaped space with what appeared to be a filled-in window and two cased openings, which led to the ticketing area (east section) that had ticketing machines and turnstiles. The entire ticketing area was enclosed by a wood wall to the west. A metal door with a glass lite at the west wall led to the below-grade service and employees' area (west section). A metal grille separated the ticketing area on the west from the first group of turnstiles. The second group of turnstiles was accessed directly from the east entrance lobby. A small room with a metal door projected between the two groups of turnstiles; this space had been used as a

coin room. It had a small hipped roof with wood shingles. Beyond the turnstiles was the steel stairway that led to the waiting area on the second floor.

The employees' area (west section) had a central corridor from which rooms on either side were accessed. There were five rooms on the ground floor including an office space, a rest room, three mechanical rooms, and a closed room that was not accessible at the time of the survey.

There was a metal door mid-corridor that opened to six steps that led down to the cellar level where there were two more rooms. The room to the north, which was under the waiting area on the second floor, had no door. The room to the south was not accessible at the time of the survey. The cellar doorway was located at the western end of the corridor.

b. Second Floor:
The second floor consisted of a small waiting area with built-in wood benches. Past the two double doors on the north wall was the concrete platform with a cantilevered wood roof. To the south of the waiting room was the roof of the Station.

D. Flooring:
The interior floors were concrete slabs finished with terrazzo.

E. Walls and ceilings:
The interior walls were mostly finished in ochre-yellow bricks similar to the brick used on the exterior. The ticket area walls (east section) had glazed yellow bricks to a height of almost three feet and then unglazed ochre bricks above them. The employees' area (west section) also had similar bricks, but these were all painted white. Door and window openings were framed with glazed bricks that had curved corners. The walls below the windowsills on the ground floor projected out and were finished with wood that was painted blue. The wood wall between the ticket area and the employees' area also had a similar blue color with a 1970s red "PATH" sign on it.

Wood shingles were applied on the wall adjacent to the coin room and above the two openings by the entrance lobby.

Terra-cotta blocks were used on some of the partition walls in the employees' area.

Ceilings on the ground floor were typically painted plaster on metal lath. These were embellished with a coved ceiling molding with top and bottom reveal. Dropped ceilings were installed in the employees' office areas. The second-floor ceiling, though it lacked the coved molding, was painted plaster similar to the ground-floor ceiling.

F. Doors:
All interior doors were located in the employees' office areas. These were either flush metal or glazed doors; both types were operated with knob or handle. The metal door that opened into the employees' office area had a hydraulic door closer. The door located mid-corridor and the door to the rest room were wood flush doors with a door knob and a handle, respectively. All doors on average were approximately 3'-0" wide.

G. Stairwell:
There was a prefabricated steel stairway approximately 6'-8" wide with two landings. It was accessed from the ground floor and led to the waiting area and platform on the second-floor level. A mosaic sign that read "TO JERSEY CITY AND NEW YORK" was at the foot of the stairway. This mosaic was removed and reinstalled in the newly built station. The glazed bricks on either side of the stairway aligned with the incline of the stairway. There were metal bar rails on either side, attached to the wall.

H. Mechanical equipment

a. Heating, air-conditioning, ventilation: The employees' area of the Station had window-mounted air conditioners and wall-mounted fans.

b. Lighting and Electrical:

Lighting:

The exterior of the Station was illuminated by wall pack lights on the east and west façades. There was one on either side of the main entry and over the service door.

The ground floor had wall pack and horizontal fluorescent tube lights mounted on walls throughout the Station. There were also ceiling-mounted light fixtures in the public areas of the Station as well as in the employees' area. Spotlights were present over the signage "PATH" on the ground floor. There were emergency lights located above the opening that led to the lobby area, by the ticketing area, and by the second-floor waiting area.

Electrical Equipment:

There were security cameras and column-mounted speakers around the ticketing area and a two-horn loudspeaker above the coin room. A train-schedule monitor existed on both the ground and second floors. There were also passenger-assistance telephones on the ground floor as well as the platform.

c. Plumbing:

The rest room on the ground floor had a toilet, a sink, and one shower. A water fountain was also present in the corridor of the employees' area of the Station.

I. Site

The Station was located on a relatively flat site on the west side of Frank E. Rodgers Boulevard South (formerly 4th Street) between Somerset Street to the north and Guyon Drive to the south. It was oriented towards the northeast, aligned with the railway tracks. Its main entry faced Frank E. Rodgers Boulevard. The Station was situated at the underpass below the PATH train tracks.

The riverfront area of Harrison below Essex Freeway (north of the Harrison Station) was historically an industrial hub and is currently undergoing redevelopment. Some of the new developments include a group of apartment complexes and the Red Bull Arena, which are located southeast of the Harrison Station. Primarily used in the past as a destination station, because of residential development, the Harrison Station has now become an origin station. The historic Station was approximately one mile from Newark Penn Station in Newark, New Jersey, and ten miles from the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. The new Headhouse is in the same location as the historic Station.

Part III. Sources of Information

A. Drawings

Original drawings for this building were not located. A set of six drawings was developed by Architectural Preservation Studio, DPC based on a field survey and measurements. The drawings were completed on October 17, 2024.

The drawings include:
Sheet 1. Site Plan
Sheet 2. Ground Floor Plan
Sheet 3. Second Floor Plan and Platform Plan
Sheet 4. Roof Plan
Sheet 5. Southeast Elevation
Sheet 6. East Elevation
Sheet 7. Northwest Elevation

B. Early Views

The only early/historic image of the 1937 Harrison Station Headhouse is the ca.1951 aerial image of Harrison, New Jersey, obtained via New Jersey State Archives - Fairchild Aerial Survey Records, which depicts the Headhouse surrounded by factories. See Figure 1.

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